

for marginal decrease in the number of post cards handled during 1997-98. In the case of envelopes, it may be seen that there was a sudden spurb in the traffic during 1997-98. There is sharp increase in the use of competition post card during 1998-99 as compared to that of 1997-98.

Telephone connections to rural post offices in Assam

197. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether telephone connections have been provided to all the rural post offices in the state of Assam;
- (b) if so, the number of Post Offices yet to be provided with this facility; and
- (c) by when this facility is likely to be provided to such post offices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) 336 rural Post Offices in the State of Assam do not have telephone facility.

(c) Telephone connections to the Post Offices not having the same are provided by Telecom authorities subject to the availability of resources.

Electronic exchanges in the district of North Cachar hills of Assam

198. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the target for installation of electronic exchanges in the district of North Cachar hills of Assam State has been achieved;
- (b) if not, the places where the electronic exchanges are to be uninstalled in the aforesaid district during the Ninth Plan; and
- (c) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) and (b) The targets for installation of electronic exchanges are fixed on year to year basis. The target for the 1999-2000 has since been achieved. It is proposed to install electronic exchange at Jatinga in the aforesaid district during 2000-2001.